

Unwanted and harmful aquatic invasive species have many places on waterfowl hunting equipment where they can hitch a ride to new waterways.

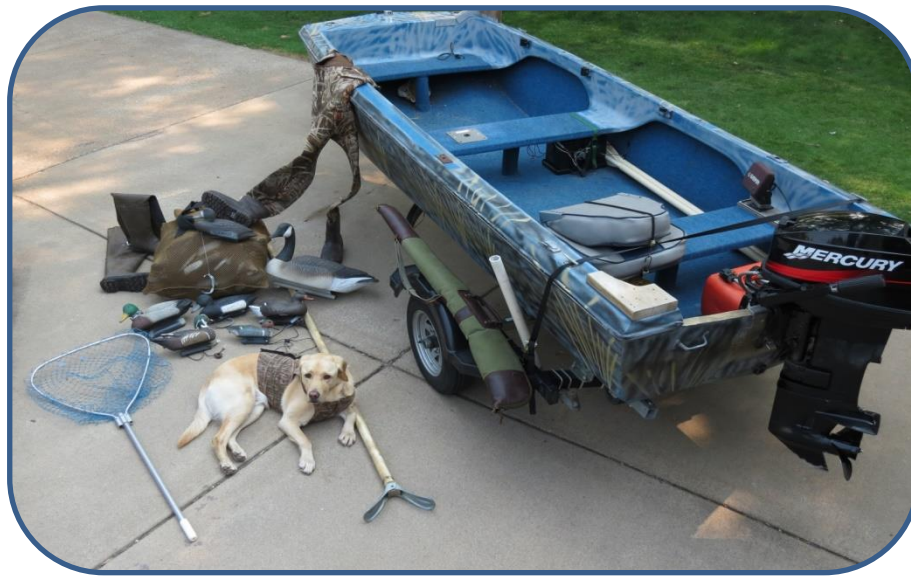


Photo credit: Chris Hamerla

Waterfowl Hunters do Their Part to Stop the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

As summer winds down and a hint of color change is showing up in the leaves, Wisconsin's hunters prepare to take to the waters for the 2018 waterfowl hunting season on opening weekend, September 29-30. It will also be the third year of Waterfowl Hunter Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Outreach, when teams of AIS partners and volunteers will be stationed at access points across the state on opening days to talk to hunters about AIS and what they can do to stop the spread of unwanted and harmful plants and animals. In Jefferson County, volunteers are being sought to cover the Princess Point Wildlife Area, and Rome Pond. Additional areas can be added if there are enough volunteers.

Modeled after the successful Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) program that reaches boaters all summer long, boat inspectors/educators conduct a hunting version of the CBCW survey and talk with them about specific aspects of duck hunting that risk AIS movement. Mud, for example, can hide seeds, the bulbils of starry stonewort, and the eggs or larvae of tiny invaders, such as spiny water fleas. Of particular concern to the hunters is the Faucet snail. These snails carry intestinal flukes that can kill thousands of ducks if they eat them.

Training and support are available to those interested in volunteering their time. If you want to volunteer in Jefferson County, please contact Patricia Cicero, Jefferson County Water Resources Specialist at 920-674-7121 or patriciac@jeffersoncountymi.gov by September 5, 2018. She will provide you with training, supplies, and work with you on volunteer locations and times.

Just a few minutes of preventative action can protect our hunting tradition for generations to come. Before launching into and leaving a waterbody, hunters must:

- **Inspect** waders, boats, trailers, motors and hunting equipment including boots, blinds and dogs.
- **Remove** all plants, animals and mud.
- **Drain** all water from decoys, boats, motors, livewells and other hunting equipment.
- **Never move** plants or live fish away from a water body.

A special consideration for waterfowl hunters is to remove all seed heads and roots when using vegetation for duck blinds. It is illegal to use phragmites in counties where the plant is listed as prohibited by NR40, in general these counties include the western half of Wisconsin.

For more information about aquatic invasive species, including where they are prohibited and restricted, in Wisconsin, [visit this WDNR webpage.](#)